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## THE JOURNAL OF ISAACO<sup>1</sup>

### I

The time approaches when all the wildness of this little world will be overrun and tamed into the trimness of a civilized parterre; when the last trail will have been trodden, the mystery of the last forest bared, and the last of the savage peoples penned into a League of Nations to die of unnatural peace. What will our children do then, I wonder, for their books of high romance? How satisfy their thirst of daring with nothing further to dare? Who will appease them, when

“The Rudyardes cease from kipling  
And the Haggards ride no more,”

when Robinson Crusoe and the classics are once read, and in a hencoop world no saga-man arises in their stead? They say that by then we shall have enlarged our borders and gone in our chariots of petrol to visit the wheeling stars. But I misdoubt these Icarian flights. It seems to me more likely that the harassed parents and publishers of those days will be driven earthward to rummage into the lumber of the past and bring out as new the obscure things that a former more heroic age had buried. In those stricken times, I hope someone may have the fortune to light upon my manuscript *Journal* of Isaaco, a slim, alluring folio that now glitters in red-and-gold upon my study shelves. It would be a pity if Time, the All-Merciless, were allowed to throw the dust of oblivion over these pretty pages, for they possess in good measure that trait of “pleasant atrocity” which wins the attention of youth.

But who was Isaaco, and what was his *Journal* that it calls for the popularity of print? Those who have followed the harrowing tale of Mungo Park's *Travels* along the

<sup>1</sup> Extract from *The Cream of Curiosity*, by Reginald L. Hine, 1920, pp. 291-316.

River Niger, in the years 1795 to 1797, and again in the fatal expedition of 1805, will be well acquainted with Isaaco. They will have smiled at his childish tempers, applauded his snakelike cunning, and laughed outright at his heathen superstitions. But the others must be gravely informed that Isaaco was a West African of the Mandingo tribe who was wont for dignity's sake to describe himself as a Mohammedan priest. Certainly he had the Pente-costal gift of tongues, for there was hardly a dialect of Bambouk, Fool-adoo, Jallonkadoo, Timbuctoo, and all the other tribes of Senegal and beyond, but he could deceive the wildest natives in it. Moreover, as a professional guide he found it paid to keep a wife in every petty state. At the worst she served to exercise the tongue; at the best she was provisioner, geographer, and spy. Never tired, never sick, never at a loss, Isaaco was simply indispensable to the European merchants trading in Senegal. So, indeed, was he to Mungo Park, that doughtiest of Scotsmen, who dared on through Bambarra and Haoussa where no white-face had ever been. Without Isaaco's genius and gigantic strength, it is unlikely that the second expedition (in 1805) would ever have reached the Niger. It was Isaaco who nursed the forty brave men who one by one sickened of dysentery; supported them on their mules, even in delirium, when they cried like children for their homes; and buried them at the last with saphies or charms from the *Koran* over their unmarked graves. It was he who watched, while the others slept the dead sleep of exhaustion; piled up the camp-fires to scare off the lions and wolves, and, worse than the wolves, those thieves and murderers (the scum of Senegal) who ever dogged their steps. None like Isaaco could placate each chieftain with the gift that his soul desired (be it cowries, beads, looking-glasses, muskets, or multi-colored waistcoats); nor when these failed, could any but Isaaco win passports with the mere honey of his tongue. Nothing could swerve him from honesty or the performance of his task. He was tied to a

tree and flogged in the presence of his local wife, set upon by the very white men he was serving, stung all over by a swarm of bees, and mauled in both thighs by a crocodile; but each time he turned up smiling and ready to go on. Nothing could stop him, for did he not keep the solemn ritual of the guides, sacrificing a black ram at the threshold of every country they entered, drawing the magic triangles and hieroglyphs on the sand of every desert they had to cross, and keeping fast in his scrip that lock of a white man's hair, which added all the knowledge of a European to the African natives who possessed it? <sup>2</sup>

## II

The agreement of Isaaco was to guide the expedition to the Niger, whence it was to proceed under the direction of Amady Fatouma, another guide. Accordingly, when Sansanding was reached, Isaaco's work was accomplished. Some days he lingered to load the great canoe (large enough to carry a hundred men). In the evenings he taught Mungo Park the names of the necessities of life in the tongues of the countries ahead. Then he took a last farewell of his master and carried back to the coast that famous letter to Lord Camden, the concluding lines of which are engraved below the writer's statue in the city of Edinburgh: "My dear friends Mr. Anderson and likewise Mr. Scott are both dead; but, though all Europeans who were with me should die, and though I were myself half dead, I would still persevere; and if I could not succeed in the object of my journey I would at least die on the Niger."

One by one the months wore on and no news came from the Niger. But in the next year (1806) there began to be rumors of a great disaster. Still nothing definite was heard, and Mungo Park's wife and his many friends hoped on. They knew his marvellous hardihood and resource, and that of the stalwart Scotsmen who were with him. In

<sup>2</sup> To this day no news has reached England of Isaaco's death, and indeed after all he survived it seems impossible that he should ever die.

1810, however, the Government, who were responsible for the second expedition, thought it time to inquire what had befallen it; so they told the Governor of Senegal to find Isaaco and offer him £1,000 to explore after the explorer and put all doubts at rest. Now the manuscript which I possess, and of which a *précis* follows, is Isaaco's account of his travels in search of Mungo Park, by which he earned his thousand pounds and did the last sad offices to his master's memory. In my judgment it contains as much of the spirit of adventure as Mungo Park's own journals, and, being written by a native, gets nearer to the life and mind of the African Negro than any white man, writing from outside, could hope to do. For that reason I often wonder why the successive editors of Park's *Travels* have passed it over, printing only the last page or two, wherein Amady Fatouma relates the explorer's end. One thing I know has been against its adoption, to wit, an insufferably dull style. Seeing that it is difficult to be dull in the Arabic tongue, and that it was impossible for Isaaco to be so in any of the tongues he used, I suspect the English translator (no doubt a mere clerk in Governor Maxwell's Office) of pruning away the flowers of speech, and making all as prim and exact as an affidavit. Or possibly Isaaco simulated dullness. He meant to have that thousand pounds, and could afford to take no risks. A tropical, luxuriant style would certainly have put his credibility in question. As it was, many of the learned societies doubted his word, and one of them roundly asserted that he had sat outside Senegal and fabricated at ease the history of his travels. It was only after Bowditch, Denham, Clapperton, and Landor had explored after the explorer that Isaaco's credit was established and the learned societies put to shame.

In the abridgment that follows I have tried to preserve not only the spirit, but wherever possible the very words, of Isaaco's manuscript *Journal*. Whatever has been discarded is of little consequence and of less grammar.

## III

Isaaco left Senegal by ship on the 22d day of the Moon Tabasky (January 7th) in the year 1810; but apparently the moon was not propitious, for he was nearly cast away in the lighter, trying to cross the bar, and in the ensuing confusion the larger part of his baggage was stolen. When he discovered this two days later at Goree and attempted to return, the winds rose and tossed the vessel about for nine days and drove him back to Goree. After some negotiation with Governor Maxwell by courier, the baggage was rescued and sent to Isaaco by road. The next few pages of his *Journal* are difficult and barren reading, bristling with nothing but the uncouth names of places where the good ship passed or anchored for the night, and with the hours duly entered as in a log book, according to the Mohammedan hours of prayer. Sailing by way of Youummy, Jillifrey, Tancrowaly, and Jaunimmarou, they came on the eighth day to Mariancounda, where Isaaco landed. This was the home of Dr. Robert Ainsley, who had so often befriended Mungo Park, fitted him out with the necessaries of life, and started each expedition on its way. Under the same hospitable roof Isaaco lodged for the inside of a week, and then, enriched with the gift of a horse and an ass and twenty bars of beads, went into the wilds to search for the fate of his master. To open the road through Giammalocoto and Tandacounda, Isaaco wisely paid court to the King of Cataba, and showered upon him an old musket and a string of amber of the quality No. 4. The next halt was at Sandougoumanna under a tamarisk tree (Isaaco always notes the trees under which he sleeps). From the shade of this in the early morning he sent presents to the kings who barred the way; tobacco to him of Sallatigua, and scarlet cloth to him of Mansangcoije. Three villages on, Isaaco's company was suddenly increased by members of his own family, fleeing before the army of Bambarra—all but his mother, who had refused to leave her kraal. Three days later he was with her, in his native place of Montogou,

and there stayed forty days, whether carousing, or fighting, or praying, he does not say. Then, prudently burying his heavy luggage, he departed, still carrying his people with him—through Moundoundou, where the chief killed a sheep in his honor and was rewarded with a flask of powder—on through Couchiar, a sleepy sort of place by name and situation, with a spreading bark tree, beneath which he drowsed the length of a day—on to Saabic, a village solely inhabited by Maraboos or priests. To gain the goodwill of Allah, he dwelt there a few days, and discovered a relation of one of his wives (no rare occurrence, seeing how many he kept) whose heart he rejoiced with some gunpowder and a gay piece of cloth. At the very next village, Talliman-goly, he fell across another, who cost him three grains of amber. Indeed, it seemed as though his store of presents would never hold out; for, no sooner had he digested the sheep his cousin killed for him, than the Bambarra army came up, and with fear and trembling Isaaco must needs dole out a whole heap of stuff—10 flasks of powder, 13 grains of amber (this time No. 1), 2 grains of coral (No. 1) and a handsome tin box. These to the King. And the King's chamberlain, goldsmith, and singing men had to be tipped as well.<sup>3</sup>

#### IV

So they paid their way through Sangnonagagy and Saamcolo (where there was a "grand palaver" to rescue Isaaco's dog, which had bitten a man and been condemned to die), on to Diggichoucoumee, a place as long as its name, which took them four days to get through. It took still longer to get clear of the next village of Dramana, for the family of one of his wives came up and bitterly opposed her going with him on a journey so hazardous. There was another "grand palaver." In the end Isaaco lost his temper and divorced his wife; and, as the law required her

<sup>3</sup> Isaaco was better able to appreciate their music than Mungo Park. In one item of his accounts, the latter writes: "To the native singers for singing their nonsense."

to return what she had received at marriage, he came rather well out of it—to be exact, with a bullock and four sheep. A little further on Isaaco met an Arab with an exceptionally fine mare, which he bought with his wife's dowry and so consoled himself. He found the mare more tractable than a wife with obstinate relations. After this episode the pace of the party mended. Numbers of villages with unpronounceable names were hurried through. The river Senegal was crossed, and a country entered, that of Bambarra, where only women could be found. Every man, even the children and the aged, had gone away with the army. At the ill-sounding place Ourigiague, just beyond, they were royally entertained. A whole bullock was roasted for them. So, too, at Medina, where they were forced to waste twelve days and devour five sheep, because one of Isaaco's servants made off with the aforesaid mare and Isaaco's precious musket. A trustier servant was despatched on his trail. In due time he returned with the mare and the musket, and preferred not to say what had happened to the thief. The petty kingdom of Casso, which they came to next, proved very trying. There were six rivers to cross, full (says Isaaco) of alligators and hippopotami. There was the forbidding rock of Tap-Pa in the desert of Maretoumane to get by. And there was the mountain of Lambatara, on the top of which they were attacked by a cloud of bees. Maddened with the stings, the Negroes ran everywhere; the mules broke loose and threw their packs down the hill. Poor Isaaco had to collect them all, physick the dying and distressed, and number the living and the lost. At nightfall he slept like a log "under a monkey-bread tree." The following day was darkened by an ominous message from the King of Bambarra. There was evidently trouble brewing ahead. To gain some friendship in the capital, Isaaco decided to bribe. To Sabila, the Chief of the King's slaves, he sent a pair of scissors, a snuff-box, and a looking-glass, and desired to be his friend. And to his old friend Allasana Bosiara, then



ambassador at Bambarra from the King of Sego, he sent a piece of silver "as a mark of being near him," and begged him not to leave until he was in safety. As he drew nearer, other signs made Isaaco convinced that "something unpleasant was planning." He was refused lodgings and water by the chiefs. A friendly merchant who had travelled under his protection was secretly warned to take himself and his goods away before it was too late. Thereupon Isaaco retired to another monkey-bread tree, ringed his little company about with muskets, double-barrelled guns, and assegais and "waited for what should happen." The following morning the King tempted them away with the friendliest of welcomes and gave them lodging and water at Wassaba, near the Royal Palace. His suggestion, however, that Isaaco should sleep separately from his people, was courteously but firmly declined. Indeed, Isaaco left nothing to chance. He first fortified the lodgings assigned to him, and then set out to find Sabila. But the King's spies who dogged his steps gave him the wrong directions, and at last he abandoned the quest. It seemed clear that Sabila did not wish him well. The next day the King sent word that he would like to see Isaaco. It had to be. Taking his life in his hands, as he had done a thousand times before, the old guide mounted his horse and rode off to the royal quarters. On the way, a friend whispered to him that he was betrayed; and on no account must he tell the King that he was bound with presents to the King of Sego; for there was not a being he hated and feared so much as that monarch, who usurped his rightful throne. "But," replied Isaaco, "he knows already I am bound there. To Sego I was sent and to Sego I must go unless force or death prevents." Arrived at the King's door, Isaaco was told that he was sleeping (yet another ruse) and that he must remain in the guard-room. It was then about sunset. For hours Isaaco waited, but the King slept on and not a soul of Isaaco's friends in the capital came to relieve his suspense. They knew he was marked down to die.

“The only person,” he writes, “who came to comfort me was a Griot, that is, a dancing woman. On leaving me she went, as I afterwards learned, to the Ambassadors of Sego and said to them: ‘Oh! me, oh! me, my back is broke (which is an expression of sorrow among the Cas-soukes). They are going to kill Isaaco.’ ”

## V

Meantime, as the guards were dancing, singing, and drinking, Isaaco stole out unperceived and made good use of his time. To the keeper of the inn, with whom he had formerly stayed, and who had some influence with the King, he gave one of his wives’ necklaces and seven grains of coral. From him he went to Madiguijou, a Counsellor of State, explained his mission to Sego, and hinted what Governor Maxwell would do if he were put to death. He even crept into Sabila’s hut, and told him the same thing; but the chief of the slaves smiled and promised nothing. Isaaco plied him with more amber No. 1, but he “smiled and smiled and still remained a villain.” Then Isaaco thought it wiser to get back into the guard-room, before the drunken soldiers grew sober and looked for him. In the morning he played his last card by getting into touch with the Ambassadors from Sego. These distinguished gentlemen were by no means eager to take on the burden of his protection, but Isaaco bade them know that the present which Mungo Park had promised King Mansong, he (Isaaco) was commissioned to bring to their King Dacha, his son. If they were determined to go without him, they might do so; but whether he lived or died they should hear of it at Sego. That fetched them. They were by no means pleased with the picture Isaaco drew of their sufferings, and proceeded to save themselves by saving him. As the King their master could simply eat up the King of Bambarra and his army at one swallow, they commanded the release of Isaaco and twenty men to conduct him on his way. At this peremptory message, King Figuing Coroba found it

politic to wake, and summoned Isaaco to his presence. The latter obeyed, went through the highest salutations, and proffered a tin box by way of asking: "Is it peace?" But there was no sign of peace. The King suddenly lost his temper, raged at the King of Sego, and, swearing he would seize everything Isaaco possessed, hurled the tin box at his head. Isaaco discreetly withdrew, while Sabila promised to pour oil on the troubled waters. The next day Isaaco, not the least daunted, presented himself with the aforesaid tin box and in addition a quantity of amber, and gunpowder, and the horse Robert Ainsley had given him. Sabila was bribed once more, and the King's singer was won over with a snuff-box. At the sight of his share, the King's anger melted like wax, and he not only gave Isaaco leave to depart that same day, but promised an escort too. . . . Isaaco coolly answered that he was in no hurry and would wait a day or two—an exhibition of nerve that quite astonished the King. "You see," he said to Sabila, "Isaaco appears to be a courageous man. If he had been of a weak-spirited mind, he would have run away and left his things in my hands." To confirm his friendship, the King called up the heir to the throne, and made him swear protection to Isaaco, an oath which the Prince hinted should be cemented by the gift of a *cousaba* or shirt. But Isaaco delicately replied that he had none quite clean enough to present. When he returned to his own country, he swore to bring him a new one. So Isaaco triumphed and returned to his own people, who were mourning him as dead. Nor did he come empty-handed, for he met a man on the way who wanted a priestly charm or amulet (*grisgris*). Isaaco scribbled an Arabic prayer on a leaf and received a bullock in exchange. This he slaughtered forthwith, feasted his large family, and made a sacrifice of thanksgiving to his god.

## VI

Three days after this distressing delay, Isaaco set out for Sego, and was brought in safety to the end of the Bam-

barra dominions. For further guidance he then hired four promising natives; but, having landed the party in the midst of a gloomy forest, they grew superstitious and ran away. "I was much disappointed," says the mild Isaaco, "at their behavior." More likely he was speechless with rage.<sup>4</sup> But there was nothing to do but to press on, and that they did through forest and desert to the lakes of Chicare and Tirium. As they reached the mud-walled village of Giangounta, one of the fattening pigs, which were to be given to King Dacha, became too fat to carry. Isaaco begged the chief of the village to look after it until it could be fetched, but he objected, "being afraid to take charge of an unknown animal." However, Isaaco explained all about its ways, wrote a *grisgris* to ward off all evil, and dumped it on the still-astonished hamlet. Thence over more lakes by canoe, through Toucha, where they found the trees from which African gunpowder was made, and by a great pyramid with a large stone on its head, where the murderous Moors lie in wait. Going by night to avoid them, Isaaco did not till day discover that one of his servants had made off with his box of jewellery and his one and only *cousaba*. Then he swore as only a Mohammedan priest can, and rode after the thief. In three days he was back with the felon, whose death penalty he postponed for a time on condition that he carried the remaining pig into Sego. At Sannanba, Isaaco found again the sister and the wife he had left there five years before. He seems to have quite forgotten them; but they had faithfully waited his return, knowing that nothing would kill him. It was from them that he first learnt that Mungo Park was dead. They had seen Alhaji Beraim,<sup>5</sup> who had been shown the canoe in the country of Haoussa, where Park met his end. However, Isaaco was determined to go on and learn for him-

<sup>4</sup> It must be remembered that Isaaco was writing a government report and careful to suppress all signs of indecorum. What a heap of money one would give to possess his private, unexpurgated journal!

<sup>5</sup> A priest of Yaour to whom Amady Fatouma, the guide, had given a small present from Mungo Park.

self on the spot. So he dismissed his sister with a piece of muslin, took on the wife, and released the prisoner, for (he says) "I was certain, once in the King's power, he would be put to death." At Counnow, a little further along the road, Isaaco came upon "an enormous large tree inhabited by a large number of bats. Another such tree lies on the west of the village, likewise full of bats; but what is most extraordinary, the bats of the east constantly go at night to the west, and return to the east at the approach of day; those of the west never go to the east. And the natives say their lawful King (Figuing Coroba who had been driven out to the petty kingdom of Bambarra) lies upon the west."

Impressing four men of every district to carry the pig to the next, Isaaco journeyed on through Dedougou, Issicord, and five other villages, all deserted. At Yamina, one of the women slaves whom Isaaco had redeemed, and who had followed his expedition, found her long-lost husband. There was much rejoicing and dancing and exchange of presents all round. Then after crossing the Niger at Joliba, they struck Sego Coro, the ancient palace of the kings, where to that day (and possibly to this) the King resorted when war was declared, to have his amulets prepared, and don his forefathers' armor. There, too, the royal prisoners were wont to be brought for confinement until the fasting moon, and then cruelly murdered in the House of Death. For eight days after it was against the law for anyone to pass the house without putting off his hat and shoes. In the reign of the great warrior-king, Walloo, not a moon passed without the sacrifice of blood.

## VII

The next day Isaaco was summoned to the presence of the King, who scented his presents from afar. Indeed the royal message was concerned only with the pigs: they were to be brought in the same ingenious manner by which Isaaco had tied them for transit. In this fashion

then, with the swine, like peace-offerings, suspended in advance, Isaaco's motley company, begrimed with eight months' travel, came straggling into Sego.

Encircled with his companies of guards, "young, strong, and beardless," the great King Dacha squatted on the ground. Behind and beside him, standing upright in the earth, glittered the four broadswords which Mungo Park had given. As a sign that he had loosed his hounds of war, the King was dressed in his military coat, shining with countless amulets of gold. In the wild flaming sky burned the remnants of the storm which had just driven him back from Douabougou. So squatted King Dacha, and with royal impassive face, showing no mark of the boiling curiosity within, stared at those unknown animals, the swine. Hard on their heels shuffled Isaaco, himself also on all fours in a deep obeisance. Behind him the bearers of the inevitable bribes: a drum, two blunderbusses, a bed, a piece of scarlet cloth, and a solitary dog. (There should have been another, but it had bolted far back at Mariancounda.) Then said Isaaco: "Maxwell, Governor of Senegal, salutes you and sends his compliments to you. Here is the present your father asked of Mr. Park and which he promised to send him." "Is the Governor well?" asked Dacha. "Yes," replied Isaaco, "he is well and desired me to beg your assistance to discover what has become of Mr. Park. We would know if he is dead or alive." After these civilities they fell to business, and Isaaco bargained for a canoe to row as far as needful down the Niger. The King hesitated over the Governor's offer of two hundred bars, for was he not far enough away to break his word? But when the two pigs got loose and waddled about, he became as happy as a child, and was no more trouble to Isaaco. To confirm his goodwill, he killed a bullock for him, and begged him to remain as his guest throughout the remainder of that moon. After a fortnight's festivities, Isaaco was preparing to depart, when the King's mind was suddenly turned another way. A

message was brought in that the Prince of Timbuctoo was at hand and desired an audience. King Dacha scowled. Then he leapt to his feet, summoned his 600 guards, and went out in full war-paint to meet him. The Prince rode up airily and said: "Being a friend of your father, I thought it my duty to let you know of my coming to take a wife, promised to me in your tribe." "And why," asked Dacha in his dreadful voice, "why have you permitted the people of your country to plunder one of my caravans, and why did *you* yourself plunder another?"

With no more said, the King returned to his kraal. It was from others the Prince learned that the merchants of the caravans had denounced him before the King, that his betrothed had been given to another, and that he was in danger of being plundered of his life. With almost indecent haste he despatched three horses to the King, gave pieces of colored stuff to all the captains of the guards, and slunk back ashamed to Timbuctoo. But King Dacha was so furiously enraged, he could neither stay in his kraal nor allow Isaaco to take leave. Away he rode to Impelbara and Banangcoro, with Isaaco trailing behind, very much out of temper and somewhat out of breath. It seemed, as the chief slave tried to explain, that when the King was angry, he pacified himself by visiting his children. Apparently he visited his wrath on them. Isaaco groaned and wondered how many there might be, and in what score of villages they dwelt apart. But he cheered up when they told him the legitimate children were six. There had been more, but by an ancient law of Sego, if a male child was born of one of the King's wives upon a Friday, its throat was cut immediately. This had accounted for three. After a decent interval, Isaaco made it known to the King that he also was very angry, and demanded to have his canoe and go after Mungo Park. The King then sent for him, apologized for forgetting all about him, and pointed in justification to the pigs, which, like a good father, he had brought along to please the children. He himself could hardly keep his eyes off such fat and unusu-

ally happy creatures. The next day Isaaco pressed the bargain, and, though it was Friday, steered away in the King's canoe for Sansanding, where he had parted from Mungo Park. And then, with the prospect of hundreds of miles in hostile country before him, he had a stroke of good fortune; for in the next village of Medina, whom should he run against but Amady Fatouma! As one might expect, Isaaco nailed him to the spot with a hundred questions. Poor Amady began to weep. "They are all dead," he sobbed. Isaaco demanded to know when and where and why. "They are all dead," the guide repeated. "They are lost for ever. It is no use asking. It is no good looking for what is irrecoverably lost." Like a sensible man, Isaaco checked the ardor of his curiosity. It certainly was hopeless to ply Amady with questions; his tears threatened to flood the Niger; it was not safe to stay there. So Isaaco gave him a day or two to subside, and arranged a meeting higher up the river.

### VIII

Amady's tale has often been printed, and there is no need here to repeat anything but essentials; his padding is even more woolly than Isaaco's. In the great canoe,<sup>6</sup> which Isaaco had helped to load before departing, Mungo Park rowed away on November 17th, 1805, with the survivors of his company of forty, namely, four white men and five Negroes, including Amady, for crew. From the very outset the voyage proved unpropitious. Almost every village they passed on the river bank came out against them in canoes, armed with bows and arrows, pikes and assegais. Each member of the crew kept fifteen muskets in action; to kill and kill was the only chance of forcing a passage through. There was no Isaaco to try the magic of conciliation. Once indeed, when they had beaten off sixty canoes with appalling slaughter, Amady ventured to

<sup>6</sup> Mansong had sold it to Park for a quantity of firearms. It was half rotten and took eighteen days to make water-tight. Forty feet long by six broad and flat-bottomed. They christened it "His Majesty's Schooner Joliba."



remonstrate. "Martin," he said, taking hold of his arm, "let us cease firing: we have killed too many already." "On which," he comments, "Martin wanted to kill me and would have done so had not Mr. Park intervened." The troubles thickened. The news of their coming had evidently been spread in advance. Just beyond Gotoigega they encountered a whole army, comprised of the Poule nation, such beasts themselves, that (says Amady) they possess no beasts of any other kind. They were suffered to go by in ominous silence—only to fall foul of a squadron of hippopotami, who nearly washed them over. At an island just beyond, Amady was landed to forage for milk; but there was no milk to be had, not even the milk of human kindness. The natives took him prisoner and decided he should be done to death. But Mungo Park was watching; and by a fortunate chance two canoes full of natives, bringing fresh provisions for sale, had come alongside at that moment. Mungo Park made it abundantly clear that he would kill every man-jack of them if a hair of Amady's head were touched. So the prisoners were exchanged. It was a narrow escape for Amady; and the uneasiness it caused was increased by the constant cries from the shore, "Amady Fatouma, how can you pass through our country without giving us anything?" "I seriously promised," he observed, "never to pass there again without making considerable charitable donations to the poor." As they came to the frontiers of Haoussa another large army of Moors watched them from a mountain. Fortunately they had no fire-arms, and could do no harm. On reaching Yaour, the first place of any size in Haoussa, Amady was landed, as his bargain was to bring the party only so far. In addition to his pay, he conveyed Mungo Park's presents to the King; but, instead of delivering these in person, gave them to the Chieftain of Yaour, who promised to forward them. A little slip, it seems, but fraught with deadly consequence. The Chieftain, finding out from Mungo Park that he did not intend to return that way, determined to

keep the presents for himself. The next morning, as Amady was paying his court to the King and expecting the presents to come, two horsemen rode in from Yaour and said: "We are sent from the Chief to let you know that the white men went away without giving you or him anything. They have a great many things with them and have given nothing. This Amady Fatouma now before you is a bad man, and has made a fool of you." Poor Amady was forthwith put in irons and all his goods confiscated, with the exception of his Arabic charms, which they dared not touch. The next morning the King sent his army to Boussa and posted it on a rock which straddled the width of the river, leaving only a narrow opening for the current to race through. Mungo Park, seeing the danger, nevertheless resolved to force a passage. But the odds were terrific. It took half the men to keep the canoe moving against the current, while the rest fired at the enemy as they hurled stones and assegais upon their heads. At last the two steersmen were slain, and the canoe went adrift. In a desperate attempt to lighten it, they cast all the baggage into the river, but still could make no headway. Overpowered by numbers and fatigue, and with no chance of killing a whole army, they saw but one hope of escape—namely, to make for the shore and get away into the bush. Taking hold of one of the white men, Mungo Park leapt into the river, Martin, with another white man, following after; but, fine swimmers as they were, the current proved too strong for them and all four were drowned. The one Negro left in the canoe surrendered, and both he and the canoe were dragged to shore and carried to the King.

After being kept three months in irons, Amady was released and in part consoled with a concubine. But he made it his first business before departing to visit the slave taken in the canoe, and learn from him the sad details of Mungo Park's destruction. The only thing that was found in the canoe after its capture was a sword belt which the King used as a saddle-girth for his horse.

## IX

Such was Amady Fatouma's tale, that Isaaco had journeyed for nine months to hear. And as he was a "good, honest, and upright man" and had sworn truth upon the *Koran*, there was nothing to do but believe and carry back the mournful tidings. To make "assurance double sure," Isaaco sent to Yaour a native who bribed a slave girl to steal the sword belt from the king's charger. Then, passing homeward through Sego, he told the news to Dacha, who was so furious that he despatched his army to wipe the country of Haoussa off the face of the earth. But Isaaco set his face for Senegal, to exchange his Arabic *Journal* for a thousand pounds.

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